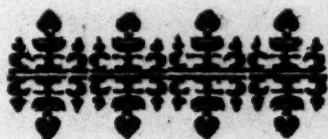


A
TREATISE
TOVCHING THE
LIBERTIE OF A
CHRISTIAN.

Written in Latine by Doctor
MARTIN LUTHER,

And Translated into English by
JAMES BELL.



LONDON,
Printed for *William Sheares*, and are to
be sold at his Shop in Britaines
Burse. 1636.

THE

GOVERNMENT

OF

CHRISTIANITY

AND ITS

RELATIONS



LONDON,

Printed for William and Mary

at his Shop in

St. Paul's Church-yard.



To the right Honorable, and most vertuous
Lady, ANNE, Countesse of Warwicke.



After I had finished this simple Translation for the behoofe of the unlettered, some of my wel-willers conceiving well of the matter, were very desirous that I should present the same to some noble personage: others challenging more knowledge in Courtly affaires, perswaded the contrary, being of opinion, that though it might in some respect seeme plausible enough, yet the present being but simple, could not deserve to be advanced to Court, especially to place of estate. And although I supposed, and partly knew, that the opinion of the later was but weake in judgement: yet so, it made so much the longer stay in deliberation, by how much I was abashed in conceit, in respect of my rudenesse, and unaptnesse, to satisfie the learned, and Courtly eares. Nevertheless, having clothed my Stranger in English attire (whom I call a Stranger, in respect of the person, who was the first Author thereof.) And well knowing the Court, to the great fame and honour thereof, by the space of many yeares now passed, to have bene the rescue of all Strangers distressed, I could not but beleieve, that in the Court, this Stranger so godly, so zealous, so learned, should be both easily accepted, and gently entertained: and encouraged by this well knowne experience, I yeelded my selfe to the first perswasion, and finding by generall report (Madame) the noble ornaments and gifts, I speak not onely of nature, but of godlinesse, wisdom, and zeale, joyned with singular mildnes and benignity, being the fruits of grace amongst the rest especially, to shine in your sacred breast, I was therby emboldned to proceed, and above all others, to presume upon your honorable patience, and to present to your Honour this my poore Stranger: In whole commendation

The Epistle Dedicatory.

I dare boldly affirm, that there was never any a more trustie servant to his Master: never any of more undaunted courage in his Masters cause: never any that adventured, or durst adventure farther: never any that used more constancie, magnanimity, and force, in battering the fortresses of the enemy: never any that pierced deeper, prevailed further, & procured larger, for the safety of poore Christians, so many hundred yeares oppressed, imprisoned, impoverished, yoked, and chained in miserable captivitie, through the monstrous outrage of that execrable Nimrod of *Rome*, amongst many of whose exploits, albeit there cannot any one be found, that is not able to replenish the Spiritual and true Christian man, with such, and so great joy, as can not with my penne be expressed, yet in my simple judgement, this one little Treatise of his, which I have now above all others selected to translate, doth farre excell and surmount in ghostly consolation, wherein are entreated no vaine, childish, or trifling toies, but sweet, delectable, serious, weighty, and matters of great importance, namely, the pure faith of a true Christian man, the joyfull union and marriage of the most amiable Bridegrome *Jesus Christ*, to the poore miserable abject and wretched Soule, the well ordering of Christian life, and the glad some Christian freedome and liberty. Even such a one is this my Stranger, whom, if it may please your Honour to vouchsafe unto your honourable patronage, I shall not onely account my selfe most happy in my choice, but also (acknowledging your honorable courtesie in full satisfaction of mine English cost, such as it is employed) yeeld my selfe doubly bounden and indebted to your Honour in any thing which my penne may endeavour, or travell may performe. The holy Ghost, the Author of all goodnesse, and ghostly consolation, replenish your heart with the most joyfull freedome of his grace, to the comfort of all such as travell in the building of Gods holy Temple.

Your Honours most humble commandment,

JAMES BELL.

To Leo the tenth, Bishop of Rome, Martyn
Luther sendeth greeting in Christ Iesu
our Lord.



Mongst the monsters of this world, with whom I have beene in continuall combate these three whole yeares and more, I am enforced now at the length to turne mine eyes unto you, and to have you in remembrance (O most holy Father Leo) yea, for as much as you onely have accounted the very cause of this my turmoyle, I cannot chuse but be alwayes mindfull of you. And albest I have beene constrained, through insatiable cruelty of your wicked Sycophants, raging against me without desert, to appeale to the next generall Councell, little esteeming the most vaine Decrees of your predecessors, Pius, and Iulius, who of a foolish tyranny have prohibited such appellation to be made from the Sea Apostolique. Yet did I never meane whiles so estrange mine affection from your holinesse, but that I have with all mine heart wished all felicity and happinesse to you and to your See, and in my daily prayers with teares and sighs, even to the uttermost of my power, have heartily besought God for the same: But as for those which have hitherto practised to terrifie me with the authority and majesty of your name, I have now begun almost to contemne and account them of no force: onely one thing yet remaineth, which I may not despise, which occasioned me at this present to addresse my letters to your Holinesse. And this it is, because I perceive that I am accused unto your Holinesse, and very grievously blamed for my rashnesse, in that I am supposed to have no consideration of your personage.

Wherein, to confesse the truth plainly, I am privy in mine owne conscience, that wheresoever behoveth me to make mention of your person, I did never speake thereof without all ho-

nonr

The Decrees
do prohibite
to appeale to
the generall
Councils.

The cause
why Luther
wrote these
Letters to the
Pope.

An Epistle to the Pope.

How Luther
behaved him-
self towards
the Pope.

nour and reverence: the contrary whereof if I had attempted at any time, I might not have beene able to iustifie, and would by all meanes possible have subscribed unto their judgements, conceived of me herein, and withall would have applyed to nothing more willingly, than to make open recantation of this my temerity, and misdemeanour in that behalfe: I have named you a Daniel in Babylon: and your notable innocencie with how earnest affection I have defended against your slanderous enemy Sylvester, every Reader doth sufficiently understand, namely, that the opinion and report of your unreprieveable life, resounding in each coast throughout the whole world, by the testimony of so many and so notable personages, is more famous and renowned, than that it may be impeached by the sinister practise of any man, though never at a potentate. I am not so void of reason, as to defame whom all men commend, so also have I beene ever of this mind, not to seeke the defacing of any one, though otherwise infamous by report of all others: for I rejoyce not at another mans blemish, who am my selfe a sufficient witness to mine owne conscience, of mine owne great beame in mine owne eye: nor can be the first that may cast a stone at the woman taken in adultery.

Why Luther
was so vehement
against
his adversaries

Indeed I have accustomed my selfe to inveigh against wicked doctrines, somewhat sharply: and have pinched mine adversaries, not for their licentious lives, but for their irreligious doctrines, somewhat earnestly: whereof it so little repenteth me, that I am fully perswaded, without all regard had of mens censures hencein, to persevere in that vehemency of zeale: induced hereunto by the example of Christ, who according to the same zeale, spared not to call his adversaries Vipers breed, blinde Hypocrites, and children of the devill. So doth Paul accuse Simon Magus to be the childe of Sathan, full of fraud and malice. And some others he reproveth openly by the name of Dogges, Deceivers, and crafty Simonists. Of whose sharpe words, if nice delicates may be admitted Judges, nothing shall be supposed more nipping and unciwill. What can be more vehement than the Prophets? certes the manners of our age, are become so tender through the furious swarme of clawbacks, that we can no sooner feele our soares a little

Paul and the
Prophets be
sharp against
the tender-
lings.
The delicate
manners of
our age.

a little discovered, but we exclaime forthwith that we are
launched: and being not able to cracke the credit of the truth
by any cavillation, we flee from her, condemning her of cur-
rissnesse, impatience, and immodesty. How shall salt season if it
be not savoury? what availeth the edge of a sword if it cannot
cut? cursed is the man that doth the Lords worke fraudu-
lently. Wherefore I humbly beseech you (my reverend Leo)
vouchsafe these my letters for mine excuse, and withall per-
swade your selfe, that I never conceived any evill of your
personage. Then also, that I am so affected towards you, as
that I could heartily wish unto your Holinesse all felicitie
for ever. Moreover, that I am not at variance with any
man, for conversation of life, but onely touching the onely
word of truth. In all matters else whatsoever, I will give
place to others, but the ward, neither can I, nor will I for-
sake or deny. Who so that judgeth of me otherwise, or hath
conceived otherwise of my writings, doth not judge truly, nor
conceive thereof aright.

Luthers vari-
ance.

But your See (which is termed the Court of Rome, and
which neither you nor any man living can deny to be more
filthy than Babylon and Sodome, and as farre forth as I can
conceive, growne to most lamentable, forlorn, & most shame-
lesse impiety) I have detested indeed, and have taken it very
grievously, that the people of Christ should be deluded under
the countenance of your name and your holinesse, and under
the pretence of the Church of Rome: and herein have resist-
ed, and will resist the same, as long as the spirit of Faith shall
live in me: not because I dare thinke to atchieve impossibili-
ties, or that by mine onely endeavour, I may hope for any
amendment in this most confusely disordered Babylon, being
circumvented with such a rabble of brain-sicke blaunchers:
But because I do acknowledge my selfe indebted to my poore
brethren, whose safety I ought to regard; that the losse of them
that perish may be abridged, or at the least lesse infection may
spread abroad from those Romish botches. For these many
yeares now Rome hath surrounded the whole world with
nothing else, (whereof your Holinesse is not ignorant) but
with utter destruction of all things, of bodies, of soules, and

The Court of
Rome.

What stiffe
hath issued
from Rome
into the world

An Epistle to the Pope.

The Church
of Rome.

with most pestiferous pattered of all monstrous wickednesse: which doth rage at this day in the sight of all men, more manifest than the Sunne in midday: And the Church of Rome which was sometime the most holy of all other, is become the most licentious denne of theeves, the most shamelesse Brothel-house of all the world, the kingdome of Sinne, Death, & Hell, in so much that it passeth all reach of man to devise any abomination, that is not haunted there, no though Antichrist himself were come.

In the meane time you (right reverend Father Leo) sit as a Lambe in the midst of Wolves, as Daniel amidst the Lions, and are with Ezekiel conversant with Scorpions. How can you alone be able to withstand all these monsters? Guard your personage with three or foure Cardinals excellent in all learning, and most vertuous in manners: what shall this handfull do amongst so great a troope? you shall all be sooner swallowed up with poyson, before you may dare attempt any reformation. The Court of Rome is utterly undone, the wrath of God is bent against it even for ever and ever. It hateth counsels, it feareth to be reformed, it is not able to restrain the furiousnesse of her impiety: and it accomplisheth the prophecy of her mother, of whom it is written on this wise: We have cherished Babylon, and she is not recovered, let us forsake her. Indeed it belonged to you, and your Cardinals, to have cured those plagues: but this goat scorneth the Physitians drugges, and this cart will not go driven nor led. Moved therefore with remorse, herein I sorrowed alwayes (right reverend Leo) because you were enstalled Pope in this wicked age, whose worthinesse deserved a better time: For the Court of Rome is not worthy to be possessed of you, and such as you are, but rather of Sathan himselfe, which in truth doth raigne in this Babylon, more than you. O would to God you could content your selfe rather with some private benefice, or with your parents patrimony, renouncing this portlinesse, wherewith those flatterers your most detestable enemies, do vaunt you to be glorious, with which glory none are meet to be glorified, but trayterous Iscariots, the impes of perdition. For what commendation else do you get in that Palace (my Leo) but that
by

Sathan raig-
neth at Rome,
not the Pope.

by how much any Teacher is more wicked execrable, so much the more safely he may shrowd him under your name and authority, to rob men of their money and souls, to heap mischief upon mischief, to oppresse Faith, Truth, together with all the Church of God? Oh most unfortunate Leo, doubtlesse enthronized in a most perillous place of renowne: for I tell you the truth, because I do wish well unto you: For if Bernard tooke compassion of his welbeloved Eugenius, when as yet there was some better hope of the See of Rome (though then also it was filthily imperious) whereof may we complain first, who have weltered these three hundred yeares now in stench and destruction? Is not this true, that under the whole outstretched face of the heavens, there is nothing more contagious, more pestiferous, and more odious, than the Court of Rome? for it is more incomparably execrable, than the Turkish impiety, so that true it is indeed, that the same which was in times past the gate of heaven, is now become a certaine gaping gulfe of Hell, and so unsatiabable a gulfe, as cannot possibly be satisfied, the wrath of God being fully bent against the same. One onely comfort remaineth for the poore wretches, if we be able to reclaim and preserve some few at the least, from this wide gaping jaws (as I said before) Behold (my holy father Leo) by what inducement, and by what reason I have inveighed against this chaire of pestilence: for it is so farre off from my thought to grow in outrage against your personage, as that I would hope to obtaine your favour, and be deemed a stout patron of your safety, if I would manfully, and valiantly crush in peeces the Gates of this your dungeon, or of this your Hell rather: for howsoever the generall force of all policie can possibly imagine to worke the utter ruine of the most horrible Court of this age, the same shall redound all to your person, to the preservation of your estate, and to the safety of many others together with you. Such as do worke her confusion, do execute your function. They do advance the glory of Christ, which do by all meanes possible detest her. To conclude, they be right Christians which are least Romanists.

But to speake hereof more at large. There never came any such thought into my head, as to inveigh against the Court

Eugenius was Pope, sometime Scholar unto Bernard.

One onely remedy remaining in the corrupt Romish Church.

An Epistle to the Pope.

Who did provoke Luther to pursue the treacheries of the false deceivers.

of Rome, or to discourse thereof any thing at all: For when I perceived that all preservatives were medicinable to procure her amendment, I withdrew me from her, and delivering her a libell of divorce, I spake unto her in this wise: Hee that is filthy, let him continue in his filthinesse still, and he that is uncleane, let him continue in his uncleannesse still, yeelding my selfe over to the calme and quiet study of holy Scriptures, whereby I might be able to profit my brethren dwelling round about me. Here now when as I could very little availe, Sathan began to open his eyes, and to prick forward his trusty servant Iohn Eccius, a notorius enemy of Christ, swelling with a certaine outragious licentiousnesse of glory, challenging me to a combate unlooked for, tripping me for one very little word escaped me unawares, touching the Supremacy of the Church of Rome. This same proud prauncing Thralo, frusbing in his Fustian fumes, wanted lustily that he durst attempt all things for Gods glory, and the honour of the holy See Apostolique. And being puffed up with saucy malapertnesse of abusing your power, made no surer account of any thing, than of present conquest, seeking thereby not so much the primacy of Peters chaire, as his owne primacy peerlesse amongst all the Divines of this age, for the better atchieving whereof, he perceived that to leade poore Luther Captive, would be not the least bravery of his triumph, which enterprize, because it happened unluckily and contrary to the exhortation of the foolish Sophister, the man waxed incredibly furious: for he perceived, that whatsoever infamy was raised by me, against the Romish Church, was procured by his owne onely temerity and rashnesse.

Cardinal Cajetane.

Vouchsafe here I beseech you (right reverend Leo) that I may here once defend mine owne cause, and discover your very naturall enemies: It is not unknowne unto you (I suppose) how your Legate the Cardinall of S. Sixtus did deale with me, an undiscreeet man, and uncivill, nay rather a false man: Into whose protection when I had yeelded my selfe and all mine estate for the reverence that I beare to your Holinesse, he endeavoured not to conclude a quietnesse which he might even with halfe a word have established easily, when

as I then promised to keepe silence, and put up my quarrell, so that mine adversaries might be enjoined to do the like. But this glorious man, not satisfied with these conditions, began to authorize mine adversaries, to give them free liberty, and to enioyne me to recant, which was no parcell of his commission. Certesse, when here the cause was yet in very good plight, through his immoderate handling, it began to fester worse and worse, whereupon, whatsoever fell afterwards, was to be imputed, not to Luther, but to Cajetanes indiscreetnesse altogether, who would not permit me to be silent, and to remain in quiet, which I did at that time most earnestly desire, for what might I do more?

After him came Charles Militius, and he also Legate of your Holinesse, who travelling many and sundry wayes, poasting here and there, forth and backe, and omitting nothing that might appertaine to the redresse of the state of the cause, which Cajetane had rashly and proudly disordered, could scarce at the length bring it to passe (though countenanced herein by the most renowned Prince Frederike the Elector) that he might have once or twice some familiar conference with me, where I once againe yeelded to your authoritie, contented to hold my peace, not refusing either Archbishop of Tryers, or the Bishop of Numburgh to be judge in the cause, which was concluded and obtained. Whiles these matters proceeded thus very orderly, behold the other, yea, a greater enemy of your estate, Eccius rusheth out with his disputation at Lypsia, which he had then published against D. Conolastadius, and picking a new quarrell of the supremacy of the Pope, bends his shot against me at unawares, and utterly dissolveth this conclusion of Peace: In the meane time Carolus Militius attendeth the successe, Disputation beginneth, Judges are chosen: yet neverthelesse, hitherto nothing was determined, & no marvell, forasmuch as through Eccius false lying, dissembing, and false packing, all things were full of unquietnesse, abounded in all melancholy, and fraught of all parts with confused disorder, so that which way soever judgement were give, greater storms would be raised: for he sought for glory, & not for the Truth. And here also I omitted no part of duty that be-
hoved me to do.

Charles Militius.

Judges of Luthers cause chosen.

Eccius. The disputation at Lypsia.

as

An Epistle to the Pope.

The flatterer
Eccius did
hurt the Court
of Rome more
than the most
mightiest ene-
my else could
do.

And I confesse, that this was not the least occasion of the discovery of the Romish trumperies: yet such as it was, if any offence grew thereby, it was altogether to be imputed to Eccius, which undertaking an enterprise above his reach, whiles he gaped over-greedily for his owne glory, did display abroad to the view of the whole world, the infamous estate of Rome. This, even this same Eccius is your enemy (my Leo) or rather the enemy of your Court, by whose onely example, a man may learne sufficiently, that there is none more pestilent an enemy, than a flatterer, for what gained he by his blaunching else but a mischiefe, which no earthly King nor Potentate could bring to passe? for the name of the Romish Court doth stinke now over the whole world, and the Papane authority is very much crased, notorious ignorance is generally cryed out upon, whereof we should not have heard any one word at all, if Eccius had not tūrmoyled the peace agreed upon betwixt Charles and me, which now himself perceiveth plain enough, all too late, and in vaine, storming against the imprinting of my Books. Thus much behoved him then to have thought upon, when like a wilde untamed Colt, he ranged wholly for glory, and when he sought nought else but his owne advancement, under the colour of your Holinesse, to your marvellous detrimēt and danger; notwithstanding the foolish vain man hoped, that I would have surceased, and kept silence, being afraid of the sound of your authority (for of his wit and learning, I do not beleewe, that he was so foole hardy) and now perceiving that I have taken courage, and my writings scattered abroad too much, being all too late sory for his unadvised wilfulness, he doth understand, that there raigneth one in Heaven, who resisteth the proud, and casteth downe the haughty of minde, if at least yet he conceive so much.

Therefore, when as by this our disputation, nothing was wrought but a greater confusion of the Romish cause, Charles Militius maketh now his third repaire to the Elders of the order, being assembled in the Chapter house, desireth advise how to qualifie the contention, which was even now growne to great trouble, and wonderfull perill: from whom (for as much as there was small hope now to overthrow me, Gods
mercy

An Epistle to the Pope.

mercy assisting me) some of the greatest personages were sent unto me, to intreat, that I would have consideration of the estimation and honour of your Holinesse, and that I should in humble letters, excuse both your innocency, and mine owne, declaring that the matter was not yet growne to so despaired a case, as to be without hope of recovery, if Leo the tenth would of his naturall inclination to lenitie, vouchsafe his aide thereto: here now as one that hath alwayes both offered, and wished for tranquillity, that I may the better apply my selfe to more quiet, and more profitable exercise, whereas I had so vehemently turmoiled my selfe to this end, that in mightinesse and force, as well of words, as courage, I might suppress the insolencie of them, whom I perceived to be farre unequall to match with me, I did not onely yeeld willingly, but with joy also and thankfull minde, imbraced the request, as a most acceptable benefit, if it may prove according to our expectation.

In this minde I come now (oh holy Father) and falling prostrate at your feet, do most humbly beseech you to grant your assistance herein, and to restraine (if it be possible) the outrage of these flatterers, the very cankers of Vnity, though masking under the vizor of peace. But to wish me to revoke that which I have written (most holy Father) it booteth not for any man to hope for, unlesse he be desirous rather to have the matter to be more largely blowne abroad.

Moreover, I do not allow these laws concerning the interpretation of Gods word to be restrained to the Church of Rome, or tyed to any place, for as much as the word of God (which teacheth freedom of all things else) ought not to be straighted, and abridged of her freedom. The two conditions reserved, there is else nothing but that I can both do, and suffer: yea, will most willingly yeeld unto: I do late hate contention: I will challenge no man, and I will not be challenged againe, but if I be teazed, I will not hold my tongue in my master Christ his behalfe, for it is an easie matter for your Holinesse to command silence, and quietnesse on both parts, the quarrels being summoned before you, and determined, which I have alwayes desired earnestly to heare.

Luther will not recall any thing.

He will not suffer the theeves to make laws for interpreting Gods word.

Beware

An Epistle to the Pope.

He counsel-
leth the Pope
not to heare
flatterers.

Beware therefore (my holy Father Leo) that you hearken not to these enchanters, which make you not a naturall man, but halfe a God, and would induce you to beleewe, that ye are able to command, and exact whatsoever you list. It will not be so, neither shall you prevaile, you are the servant of servants, and placed in the most dangerous estate of all others: Let them not beguile you, which imagine you to be the Lord of the World, which will not permit any man to be a Christian man, unlesse he be subject to your authoritie, which do chatter and jangle, that you are of power to command in Heaven, in Hell, and in Purgatory. Those, even those be your enemies, and seeke the destruction of your soule, as the Prophet Isaiah doth witnesse, O my good people, such as do praise thee, even those do deceive thee. They are out of the way, which do extoll your majesty above the Councell and universall Church. They are out of the way which do invest you only in the right of interpreting Scriptures, for such do practise to establish in the Church all their owne impieties, under your name. And alas for wo, by the meanes of those persons, Sathan hath prevailed much in your predecessors. To be brieft, beleewe none of them that do magnifie you, but such as do humble you, for this is the judgement of God, He hath throwne downe the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meeke. Behold what inequality there is betwixt Christ and his successours, when as they all notwithstanding will be accounted Vicars of Christ. And I feare much, lest many of them be his Vicars indeed a great deale too earnestly: for a Vicar is he that doth present the person of his Prince being not in place. Now, if the Pope do beare dominion whiles Christ is not present, nor resiant within his heart, what is he lesse, than the Vicar of Christ? But what manner of Church is that then else, but a rude multitude without Christ? And what manner of Vicar is this else, but Antichrist, and an Idoll? How much more truly spake the Apostles, who named themselves the servants of Christ being present, and not Vicars of Christ being absent.

What a Vicar
is.

Peradventure, I shall be accounted a shamelesse fellow, that dare presume to teach so mighty a Potentate, from whom
all

An Epistle to the Pope.

all others ought to be instructed, and from whom all iudiciall Courts ought to fetch definitive sentence (as your pestiferous clowbacks do arrogantly vaunt) but I follow the example of Bernard, in his Book entituled De consideratione ad Eugenium, a necessary Book for all Popes to know by heart. Neither do I take this upon me of any greedy desire to teach, but of dutifull affection, in a pure and faithfull zeale, which doth enforce us to be afraid, even of the most plausible things in our neighbours: and being altogether exercised in the perils and profits of other men, will not admit any respect to be had of the worthy or unworthy: for in as much as I know, that your Holinesse is troubled, and tossed at Rome, that is to say, in the maine sea of all sides environed about with infinite dangers, and that you swimme now in succourlesse waves miserably, as that you stand in need of the meanest help of any your poorest brethren: I judged it a point of no great absurdity, if I did lay aside the remembrance of your majesty for a time, untill I had executed the duty of Love. I will not flatter in so weighty and perillous a cause: in which doing, if I be not conceived to be most friendly, and most humble unto you, there is one that doth conceive and judge.

To conclude, because I would not seeme to come empty handed unto your Holinesse, I bring with me this little Treatise, published under your name, as a pledge of truce to be concluded, and of good successe: wherein you may somewhat conceive in what kinde of studies I can, and am very desirous to employ my time, more fruitfully and commodiously: if I heretofore might, or hereafter may now conveniently be free from your wicked flatterers. The matter is small, if you regard the outward coat, but if you comprehend the thing it selfe, it is (if I be not deceived) a most notable patterne of a Christian life, briefly compiled. Neither have I ought else being a poore man to gratifie your Holinesse withall, neither need you any other present, than spiritnall consolation, wherewithall I do recommend my selfe wholly to your fatherhood, and Holines. Which I beseech Christ Iesu to preserve for ever. Amen.

At Wittenberge the sixth of September,
in the yeare of our Lord, 1520.



A TREATISE OF

MARTINE LUTHER touching

Christian Libertie.



Any men have beene of opinion that Christian Faith is an easie matter, yea of them also not a few have accounted it in the number of vertues, even as a companion of Vertue it selfe. And this have they done, because they have had no triall thereof by any prooffe, nor have at any time tasted of what pow^r and force it is: whereas it cannot be possible that any man may be able to write pithily, or understand effectually the things that are written concerning the same truly, unlesse being pinched at some one time or another with some crosse of tribulation, he hath felt the inward spirit thereof: But who so hath had but a meane taste of the same, can never possibly be satisfied with writing, speaking, thinking, and hearing thereof. *For it is a lively spring unto everlasting life,* according as Christ calleth it in the fourth of *John*. Wherein my selfe, albeit I make no vaunt of my store, and withall do acknowledge the weaknesse of mine imbecillitie, yet do neverthelesse trust, that by meanes of sundrie and grievous temptations wherewith I have beene turmoyled, I have attained no small dramme of Faith. And that I am thereof able to treat (though not so eloquently, yet certes more substantially than) those literall and over-subtil Schoolmen have hitherto yet disputed, as men altogether ignorant in the things which themselves have written. To the end therefore I may

may discover a more easie way to the unlettered to wade herein (to whose capacities I do onely apply my selfe) I do set downe first these two propositions touching the freedome and bondage of the spirit.

- 1 *A Christian man is a most free Lord of all, subject to none.* *The propositions*
- 2 *A Christian man is a most dutifull servant of all, subject to all.*

Although these two propositions seeme to be meere contraries, yet when they shall be found to have in them a certaine sweet agreement, they will availe very much for our present purpose. For Saint *Paul* is the Author of them both, namely, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians the twelfth Chapter, *Being otherwise free, I made my selfe servant of all.* And in the 13. to the Romanes. *Owe nothing to any man, but that ye love one another.* But love is naturally dutifull, and humbly obedient to the thing that is loved. Even to Christ, though Lord of all, yet being borne of a woman, was made under the Law, both free altogether, and a servant, at one selfe time in the shape of God, and in the shape of a servant. *1. Cor. 12, Rom. 13.*

Let us enter into some higher and more deepe consideration of those sayings. Man doth consist of two natures, to wit, spirituall, and corporall. In respect of the spirituall nature (which some do terme to be the soule) he is called spirituall, inward, and of the new man: In respect of the corporall (which some call the flesh) he is called the carnall, outward, and the old man. Of the which the Apostle in the second to the Corinthians, the fourth Chapter. *Although our outward man be corruptible, yet our inward man* *2. Cor. 4.* *is renewed day by day.* So that it cometh to passe, through this diversitie, that in the Scriptures two contraries are affirmed of one selfe same man, because that these two men being within the same one man, do keep continuall battell against each other, *Whilest the flesh doth covet against the* *Galat. 5.* *spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,* as in the Epistle to the Galath, the 5. Chapter.

*In what things
(Christian liberty)*

First therefore let us examine the inward man, and see by what reason he may be made just, free, and a true Christian, that is to say, spirituall, new, and an inward man. And it is certaine, that no externall thing at all (how glorious title soever it beare) is in any respect available to the attaining of Christian righteousness, or freedome, as neither of any value to the procuring of unrighteousnesse or bondage, which is proved by a very easie demonstration. For what availeth it to the soule, if the body be in good liking, health, and full of life: If it eate, drink, and do freely what it listeth, when as even the most wicked abjects, bond-slaves of all mischiefe, do enjoy the same? Again, what losse doth the soule sustaine by sicknesse, imprisonment, scarcitie of food, thirst, or by any other externall disadvantage, when as the very reprobate, and such as be cleare voide of all good conscience, are molested with the same. None of all those externall casualties do extend to the freedome, or bondage, of the soule. In like manner it shall be to small purpose, if the body be garnished with gay coapes, such as Priests do weare, or be conversant in holy sanctuaries, or be exercised in holy Masse and Mattens, or if it pray, fast, abstaine from certaine meats, or do inure it selfe to whatsoever exercise wrought and possible to be wrought by the body and in the body. To the freedome and righteousness of the soule is requisite matter of farre greater importance, whereas those externall things aforesaid, may happen unto the most wicked, by practising of the which, they become no better then plaine hypocrites. Contrariwise, it shall nothing prejudice the soule, to have the body clad with unhallowed garments, to frequent prophane places, to eat and drink of all sorts of meat without choice, not to bleat out prayer by note, yea to passe over all those works aforesaid, which may be performed by the very hypocrites.

Be it also that we reject all things, yea, even speculations, meditations, and whatsoever may be done by the endeavour of the soule, it profiteth nothing. One thing, yea and that onely and alone is needfull to the attainment of life,

life, righteousness, and Christian liberty, which is the sacred word of God, the Gospel of Iesu Christ, according to the testimony of Christ himselfe in the 11. Chap. of *John*. *I am the resurrection and life, he that beleeveth in me, shall not dye for ever.* And in the 8. Chap. of *John*. *If the Sonne make you free, you shall be truly free.* And in the 4. Chap. of *Matth*. *Man liveth not by bread onely, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* Let us therefore take this for a strong and an undoubted Bulwarke, that the soule may want all things except the word of God, without the which nothing in the world can preserve her in safety: But having the word, she is rich, destitute of nothing, for as much as the word of God is the word of life, of light, of peace, righteousness, salvation, joy, freedom, wisdom, power, grace, glory, and inestimably the treasure incomparable of all goodnesse. And this is it that moved the Prophet in all his Octionary and in many other places, with so many deepe sighs and groanings to skrich out, and to call upon the word of God. Againe, neither is there any more horrible a plague of Gods wrath, than whiles he sendeth famine of hearing his word, as he speaketh in *Amos*: as neither is there any greater grace than if he spread abroad his word, as is specified in the 107. Psalme. *He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.* Neither was Christ sent to any other Ministry; then the ministry of the Word; nor is the Apostolicall Bishopricke, and whole order Ecclesiasticall, called and instituted otherwise, than to the ministry of the Word.

But thou wilt demand, what word of God is this, and after what manner must it be used, considering there be so many words of God? I answer, the Apostle expresth the same, namely, the Gospell of God concerning his sonne incarnate, crucified, risen againe, and glorified by the holy Ghost the sanctifier. For Christ hath preached, that is to say, hath sed the soule, hath justified, delivered, and saved the soule, if she beleewe his doctrine, for Faith onely is the late and effectuall use of Gods word, as *Ro. 10*. *If thou confesse with thy mouth, and beleewe with the heart, that God*

Gods word necessary for the soule.

Iob. 11.

Iob. 8.

Matth. 4.

David.

Famine of Gods word an horrible plague.
Amos.

Psalm. 107.

which is the word of God.

Rom. 1.

Rom. 10.

hath

hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. And againe, The end of the Law is Christ, unto righteousness to all them that do beleve. And to the Romans the first, The just man shall live by his owne faith, for the word of God cannot be comprehended and embraced by any works, but by faith onely. Even so it is manifest, that as the Soule hath need of the onely word, to obtaine righteousness and life, even so it is justified by onely faith, and no works; for if it might be justified by any other meanes, then should it not stand in need of the word, and so consequently no need of faith. But this faith cannot consist altogether with works, that is to say, if thou presume to be justified together with works, whatsoever they be, for this were even to halt on both legges, to worship Baal, and to kisse the hand, which of all other is abominable, as witnesseth Job. Therefore, when thou beginnest to beleve, thou dost learne withall, that all things in thee are altogether blame-worthy, sinfull, and damnable, according to that saying of the Apostle in the 2. to the Romans, All have sinned, and have need of the glory of God. And Rom. 3. There is none that doth good, all have declined out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable: for if thou know this once, thou shalt know that it is necessary for thee to hold fast Christ, that beleiving on him, who hath suffered for thee, and is risen againe, thou maist be made another man through this faith, being made free from all thy finnes, and justified by the merits of Iesu Christ onely.

Rom. 1.

Faith onely
justified.

Job.

Rom. 2.

Rom. 10.

Man is not iu-
stified by any
externall thing.

Therefore, for as much as this faith cannot beare dominion in any, but in the inward man, according to the testimony of Paul in the 10. to the Romans, *With the heart we do beleve unto righteousness,* And for as much as this faith onely doth justifie, it is evident that the inward man cannot in any wise be justified, made free, and saved by any externall worke or exercise, and that works whatsoever, availe nothing thereunto, as on the contrary through impiety, and onely unbeliefe of the heart, man is made guilty, and the bond-slave of sinne, and not by any external sinne or worke. And therefore the first and principall care of every

every Christian man ought to be in this especially, that setting aside all vaine confidence of works, he strengthen his faith more and more, and by daily increasings grow in knowledge, not of works, but of Christ Iesu crucified for him, and risen againe, as *Peter* in the last of his first Epistle teacheth, for as much, as none other worke doth make a true Christian man. So Christ in the 6. of *John*, when the Jews asked a question what they should do to do the works of God? excluding the multitude of works, wherewith he perceived them to swell, and puffed up in pride, did prescribe unto them one onely rule, saying, *This is the work of God, to beleeve on him whom he hath sent, for him God the Father hath sealed.* From hence right faith in Christ duely proceeding is a treasure inestimable, containing in it selfe all salvation, and preserving from all evill, as in the last of *Marke*, *He that beleeveth and is baptised, shall be saved, he that beleeveth not, shall be damned,* which treasure inwardly regarding, did in the 10. of his Prophecy say, The decreed consumption overfloweth with righteousness, and the Lord of hosts shall perfectly fulfill the thing that he hath determined in the midst of the whole world, as if he had said, Faith which is a brieft and summary fulnesse of the Law, shall replenish the beleevers with so great righteousness, that they shall not have need of any other helpe to attaine righteousness: and the same doth *Paul* testifie in the 10. to the Romans, *For with the heart we beleeve unto righteousness.* But thou dost aske by what meanes it cometh to passe, that faith onely may justifie, and give such a treasure of so great goodnesse without works, seeing that the whole Scriptures do prescribe unto us so many works, so many ceremonies, and so many laws? I do answer, above all things be mindfull of this chiefly that hath beene spoken of before, to wit, that onely faith without works doth justifie, doth deliver, and doth save, which we will make more manifest hereafter. In the meane time scale up this, that the whole Scripture of God is divided into two branches, namely, commandments and promises. Indeed the commandments do teach good things, but the things that

1. Pet. ult.

John 9.

Faith a treasure inestimable

Mark. 16.

Rom. 10.

The Scriptures have commandments and promises.

that

that are taught by them are not forthwith performed, for they do pronounce what we ought to do, but do not give power to do the same, but are instituted to this end, to discover man to himselfe, by meanes whereof, man may know his owne disability towards the good, and so despaire of his owne strength: and for this cause they are called the old Testament, and so they be indeed. As for example, *Thou shalt not covet*, is a Commandment, by the which we are convinced all to be sinners, because man cannot chuse but covet, whatsoever his endeavour be to the contrary. And therefore, that he may not covet, and so consequently fulfill the commandment, he is compelled to despaire of himselfe, and to seek elsewhere for help of another, which he is not able to finde in himselfe, as *Osee* saith, *Thy destruction cometh of thy selfe, O Israel, and thy health onely from me*. The observance of which one Commandment, is generall to be observed in all the rest, for all the Commandments are in all respects alike impossible unto us, and beyond our reach. Now when man is taught his owne weaknesse by the commandments, and thereby brought into perplexity, how he may be able to accomplish the law knowing that the law must be so of all parts accomplished, that no one jot so much, or tittle thereof may be pretermitted, otherwise in danger of eternall damnation irrecoverable, being then truly humbled, and embated to nought in his owne eyes, he findeth nothing in himselfe, whereby he may be justified, and come to salvation. Lo, here cometh the other branch of the Scripture, namely, the promises of God, which do bring the glad tydings of the glory of God, and speake on this wise, If thou wilt fulfill the Law, and not covet, as the Law requireth, behold here a remedy, Believe in Christ, in whom be promised unto thee, grace, righteousness, peace, freedome, and in whom thou shalt have all things if thou beleeve, and without whom thou shalt lack all things if thou dost not beleeve, for that which is impossible to thee in all the works of the Law (which be many, and yet unavailable to salvation) thou shalt very easily, and briefly atchieve, and bring to passe through faith, becau

All the Commandments be equally impossible to be accomplished by us.

The law must be satisfied.

because God the Father hath so established all things in faith, that whosoever hath faith, may possesse all things, and whosoever lacketh faith, may possesse nothing, *For God hath shut up all things under unbeliefe, that he might have mercy on all.* *We accomplishe all by faith.*

Rom. 11.

On this wise the promises of God do give freely unto us, that which the commandments do exact of us perforce, and do fulfill that, which the law doth straitly command: that so all things may belong unto God onely, as well the commandments, as also the performance of the same. Onely God commandeth, onely God performeth, and therefore Gods promises have relation to the new Testament, yea rather are the new Testament it selfe. *God onely commandeth, and performeth.*

For as much therefore as the promises of God be holy words, true, just, peaceable, and full of all goodnesse, it cometh to passe, that the soule which doth cleave steadfastly to the same, with an unshaken faith, is become so united unto them, yea is also wholly swallowed up of them, that it doth not onely partake thereof, but is thoroughly gorged, and made drunken with all the power and force of the same: for if the touching of Christ did give health, how much more shall a very tender feeling of the word in the spirit? nay rather a through swallowing down of the word, communicate to the soule all things that appertain to the word? By this meanes therefore, the soule through faith onely without works, beleeving in the word of God, is justified, sanctified, pacified, delivered, and replenished with all goodnesse, and it is truly made the daughter of God, as it is said in the 1. of John, *He gave them power to be made the sonnes of God, even them that do beleve in his name.* *The first arme of faith.*

1ob. 1.

By this it may be easily perceived, from whence faith hath received so great force, and why neither any one, nor all good works are comparable unto her, because no work can cleave fast unto Gods word, nor be within the soule, wherein faith onely, and the word, do reigne and governe, for such as the word is, such becometh the soule, made by force of the word, even as a fiery plate of iron doth glimmer like unto fire, by meanes of uniting the fire and the plate

*Another arme
of faith.*

*The greatest
honour.*

*The greatest re-
proach.*

*Perfect obedi-
ence.*

plate together, so that it is manifest, that to a Christian man faith sufficeth onely for all, and that he needeth no works to be justified by. Now if he need no works, then also he needs not the law: if he have no need of the law, surely he is then free from the law. So this also is true. The law is not made for the righteous man, and this is the same Christian liberty. Our faith which doth worke in us, not to be idlers, nor to give our selves to lust and evill life, but that we be not tyed to a necessity of observing the law, or doing works, to the end to obtaine righteousness, or salvation thereby. Let this be the first arme of faith, and let us see another, for this also is the duty of faith, that it reverence him on whom it beleeveth, with a most godly and earnest-bent affection, to wit, that it account him true, and worthy to be beleeved, for there is no honour like unto the opinion conceived of truth and righteousness, wherewith we do most highly esteeme of him whom we do beleeve, for what are we able to ascribe to any person, more than truth, righteousness, and goodnesse, of all parts perfect and absolute? Contrariwise, it is a detestable reproach, to conceive a secret opinion of a man to be false, faithlesse, and wicked. So the soule, as long as it beleeveth steadfastly in God that maketh the promise, doth account him true and righteous, than which opinion can nothing be more acceptable to God. This is the highest honour of God, to ascribe unto him truth, justice, and whatsoever else ought to be yeilded to him whom we do beleeve: this man yeeldeth himselfe ready to execute all his will: this man doth sanctifie his name: this man suffereth himselfe to be exercised, according to the will and pleasure of God, because cleaving firmly to his promises, he doubteth not but that he is true, just, wise, and will do, dispose, and governe all things for the best: but is not such a soule by the same his faith most humbly obedient to God in all things? what commandment remaineth then, which this obedience hath not sufficiently satisfied? what fulnesse can be more absolute, than all manner of humble obedience? but this obedience cometh not by works, but by faith onely, and be-
leeving

leaving the promises. On the other side, what Rebellion? what impiety? what greater reproach can there be unto God, than not to beleve him when he promiseth? for what is this else, than either to make God a lyar, or to be doubtfull of his truth? that is to say, to ascribe truth to himselfe, and to condemne God of vanity and lying. Wherein doth he not deny God, and make to himselfe an image of himselfe in his owne heart? what availe deeds (I pray you) wrought in this unbeleefe? though they seeme never so Angelicall, or Apostolicall? And therefore very well did God conclude all, not in wrath and lust, but in unbeleefe, lest such as faine that they have fulfilled the law through chaste and meek works of the law (such be vertues humane and civill) should presume upon their salvation, when, as being shut up in the sinne of unbeleefe, they must either seeke for mercy, or to be damned through justice. But when GOD doth see truth to be ascribed unto him, and that he is worshipped with the faith of our heart, which is as much honour as he desireth, then doth he honour us againe, and imputeth unto us truth and righteousness for this faiths sake: for faith, in yeelding to God his owne, doth worke truth and righteousness, and therefore God doth recompence our righteousness againe with glory, for it is true and just, that God is true and just. So also, to ascribe unto God justice and truth, and to confesse the same, is to be true and just. To this effect we reade in the 1. of the Kings, the 5. Chapter, *Whosoever doth honour me, I will glorifie him: and whosoever doth despise me, shall be naught set by.* The same also pronounceth Paul to the Romans, the 4. Chap. *That to Abraham his owne faith was imputed unto righteousness,* because through the same he gave unto God the glory most absolutely, and that if we beleve, faith shall be imputed for the same cause unto us for righteousness. The third arme of faith, which is a jewell inestimable, is this, that it coupleth the soule with Christ, even as the spouse with her husband. By which Sacrament (as Paul teacheth) Christ and the soule are made one flesh. If they be one flesh, then is there a true marriage betwixt them,

Rebellion.

God doth honour them that beleve on him.

1. King. 5.

Rom. 4.

The third arme of faith.

The uniting of the soule unto her spouse.

Behold inestimable treasures.

them, yea, rather, a marriage of all other most perfect, absolutely accomplished betwixt them (for the marriages betwixt man and wife be but slender figures of this union) whereupon it followeth, that all things are common betwixt them, as well good as bad, so that whatsoever Christ doth possesse, the faithfull soule may boldly presume upon the same, and triumph over them, as though they were his owne. Likewise, whatsoever appertaineth to the soul, the same may Christ challenge unto himself, as if they were his owne. Let us compare these together, and we shall perceive inestimable treasure. Christ is full of all grace, life, and saving health; the soule is fraught full of all sinne, death, and damnation. Now let faith come betwixt these two, and it shall come to passe, that Christ shall be loaden with sinne, with death, and with hell, but unto the soule shall be impured grace, life, and salvation; for it behoveth Christ, if he be the husband, to accept, and joyntly possesse the things appertaining to his Spouse, and withall, to communicate to his Spouse the things that appertaine to his possession, for he that giveth unto her his body, and himselfe wholly, how can it be, but that he must give her all things else withall? And he that is possessed of the Spouse, how doth he not withall possesse also the things appertaining to the Spouse? Here cometh loe to the view a most sweet spectacle, not onely of communion, but of a comfortable battell, of victory, of salvation and redemption.

For in as much as Christ is God and Man, and such a person, as never yet sinned, never dyeth, nor is damned, yea, such a one, as neither can sin, nor dye, nor be damned, and that his justice, his life, his saving health, is unvanquishable, everlasting, and omnipotent; when as (I say) such a person doth communicate to himselfe, yea rather doth wedde (as his owne) the sinne, death, and damnation of his Spouse through the wedding Ring and union of Faith. And that the case now standeth none otherwise, then as if they were his owne proper peculiar, even as if himselfe had sinned, were travelling, dying, and descending into hell, to bring all things in subjection: And that sinne, death, and

and hell could not swallow him, being all of necessitie cleane swallowed up in him by a miraculous conflict (for his righteousness is greater than the finnes of all men: his life surmounteth in power all death, his saving health is more victorious than all hell) even so the faithfull soule, through the assurednesse of her faith in Christ her husband, is delivered from all finnes, made safe from death, garded from hell, and endowed with the everlasting righteousness, life, and saving health of her husband Christ. On this wise Christ doth couple her unto himselfe a glorious Spoule without spot and wrinkle, cleansing her with the fountaine in the word of life, that is to say, through faith, the word of life, of righteousness, and of salvation. Even so doth he marry her unto himselfe in faith, in mercy, and compassions, in justice and judgement, as he testifieth in the 2. of *Osee*.

Ose 2.

Wherefore who is able to value the royaltie of this marriage accordingly? who is able to comprehend the glorious riches of this grace? where this rich and loving husband Christ doth take unto wife this poore and wicked Harlot, redeeming her from all evils, and garnishing her with all his owne jewels. For it is impossible now, that her owne finnes should destroy her, sithens they are laid upon Christs shoulders, and swallowed up in him, sithens also it doth now possesse the same righteousness in her husband Christ, of the which she may now embolden her self, and presume upon them as in her owne right against all her owne finnes, against death and hell, and may with confidence encounter the enemy, and say, if I have sinned, yet my sweet husband Christ, in whom I do beleeeve, hath not sinned, all whole riches are mine, and all mine are his: As in the Canticle of *Salomon*, *My welbeloved husband to me, and I unto him*. This is that *Paul* speaketh of in the first to the *Corinthians*, the 15. Chapter. *Thanked be God which hath given us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord: Even the victory over sinne and death*. And in the same place he bringeth in, that *sinne is the sting of death, but the force of sinne is the law*.

The majesty of this royall marriage.

1. Cor. 15.

For what cause
faith is so much
esteemed.

The true wor-
ship of God,

Faith maketh
works.

The prerogative
of the first birth

Hereof therefore you do understand againe, what the cause is that faith is so highly commended: that it is able alone to fulfill the law, and to justify without any helpe of works: For thou dost perceive how the first Commandment, *Thou shalt worship one God onely*, is now accomplished by Faith onely: For if thou were nothing else from the sole of the foot, to the crowne of the head but good works, yet shouldst thou not be just, nor shouldst thou worship God, nor fulfill the first Commandment, for as much as God cannot be worshipped, unlesse the praise and glory of all truth and all goodnesse be truly ascribed unto him: but this cannot works bring to passe, onely the faith of the heart atchieves this. For we do glorifie and confesse him to be true, not by working, but by beleeving. In this respect Faith onely is the righteousnesse of a Christian man, and the accomplishment of all the Commandments: For he that doth accomplish the first Commandment, doth fulfill all the rest with no labour at all. For works being things without sense, cannot glorifie God, though they may be practised to Gods glory, being joyned with faith. But we, at this present, enquire not the works wrought, of what qualitie they be: but we do enquire of the person that maketh the works, that glorifieth and bringeth forth the works: And the same is the very Faith of the heart, the head and substance of all our righteousnesse, whereupon it followeth, that the doctrine that teacheth the satisfaction of the law by meanes of works, is blinde and perillous, for as much as before all works, it behoveth that all the Commandments be accomplished, and that works do follow after this fulfilling of the law, as we shall heare more at large afterwards.

But to the end we may more manifestly behold this grace which this our inward man doth possesse in Christ, it is to be observed, that in the old Testament, God did sacrifice to himselfe the first-borne of every mankinde, and the first birth was wonderfully esteemed, surmounting all other in double honour: Namely, in the Priesthood, and in the kingdome, for the first begotten Brother was Priest and

and Lord of all other : under which shadow Christ was prefigured unto us, the true and onely first begotten of God the Father, and of the Virgin *Mary*, and the true King and Priest : but not according to the flesh and the world, for his kingdome is not of this world, he reigneth and sanctifieth in spirituall and heavenly things, which are righteousness, truth, wisdom, peace, salvation, &c. Not as though all things of this world and of hell, were not also in subjection unto him (otherwise how could he preserve and defend us from them all) but because his kingdome doth consist neither in them nor of them. Even so neither his Priesthood doth consist in outward pompe of apparrell and gestures (such as the humane Priesthood of *Aaron* was, and as our Ecclesiasticall Priesthood is at this day) but in spirituall things, by the which he doth make intercession for us unto God the Father in heaven, by a certaine invisible office, and there doth offer up himselfe, and performeth all things that behoved a Priest to do. Even as *Paul* doth prescribe him by a figure of *Melchisedech* in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*. Neither doth he onely pray, and make intercession for us, but also doth teach and instruct us, inwardly in spirit with the lively doctrine of his spirit, which two are the peculiar properties of a Priest, which also is figured in carnall Priests by prayers and visible preachings.

Whereof the kingdome of Christ doth consist.

Christ's Priesthood.

Paul's Priestly office.

Paul to the Hebrews.

And even as Christ by his first birth did obtaine these two dignities, so doth he impart and communicate the same to every his faithfull spouse, by the right of the foresaid marriage, whereby they are all Spouses, whosoever are espoused to the husband. And hereof cometh it, that we all that beleeve in Christ are Priests and Kings in Christ, as in the 1. of *Peter*, the second Chapter, *You be a chosen kindred, a people of adoption, a kingly Priesthood, and a priestly kingdome, to the end you should shew forth his power, who hath called you from darknesse, into his marvelous light: which two are thus to be taken.*

How it is to be taken that faithfull Christians be Priests.

1. Pet. 2.

First as concerning the kingdome, every faithfull Christian through faith is so advanced above all other things, that

Christian king.

Rom 8.

1. Cor. 3.

Note.

The spirituall
kingdome.We be Priests
for ever.

that in spirituall power he is become Lord over all, so that none of all the creatures can do him any harme at all: Nay rather all things are made subject unto him, and compelled to serve for his safety, according to the testimony of Paul in the eight to the Romans. *All things do worke together to the elect to good.* Likewise in the first to the Corinthians. *All things are yours, whether it be life or death, things present, or things to come, but you are Christs.* Not that to every Christian, all preeminence is given in bodily power to possesse and rule over all things (which furious frensie hath bewitched many our Prelates every where) for this dominion is proper to Kings, Princes, and Potentates of the earth: whereas the very use and manner of our lives, doth sufficiently teach us, that we are subject to all, that we do endure many tribulations, yea, and even dye the death. Nay, rather, by how much a Christian doth excell in Christianitie, by so much the more is he subject unto all inconveniences, vexations, and deaths, as we may easily see in the very flower of the first borne Christ himselfe and all his holy brethren. This power is spirituall, which doth beare dominion even in the midst of enemies, and is mightie even amidst the very tortures, which is nothing else in effect, but that power is made perfect in weaknesse, and that in all things I may make gaine for my safety: in so much, that the crosse and death it selfe may be compelled to serve for my behoofe, and to worke my salvation: and this is that high and notable dignitie, yea, that true and omnipotent power, the spirituall kingdome, wherein nothing is so good, nothing so bad, which shall not worke to my good, so that I beleeye. And yet have I need of nothing (sithens onely faith doth suffice to salvation) but that faith may in the same exercise her force, and the dominion of her liberty. Behold now this is that inestimable power and liberty of Christians.

So also we be not onely most free kings of all other, but we be Priests also for ever, which doth farre surpass all kingdomes: For through our Priesthood we are made worthy to appeare before God, to plead and pray for other men,

men, and one to instruct the other the things that are of God. For these be the offices peculiar unto Priests, which can in no wise be committed to any unbeliever. Such a prerogative hath Christ obtained for us, that as joynt brethren, coheires, and joynt kings, so also we should be unto him joynt Priests, presuming boldly with confidence through the spirit of Faith to preach unto the presence of God, and to cry unto him, *Abba* Father, and to pray for each other, and to do all things that we see to be executed and figured by the visible and corporall function of the Priests. But unto the unbeliever nothing serveth or worketh unto good, but he is become servant of all other, to whom all things turne unto evill, because he doth wickedly employ all his endeavour for his owne behoofe, and not to the glory of God. And by this meanes he is neither Priest but prophane, whose prayer turneth unto sinne, nor doth appeare before God, because God doth not heare sinners. Wherefore who is able to comprehend the preheminance of Christian dignity? which through her own kingly power executeth dominion over all things, over death, life, sinne, &c. and which through her priestly glory is able to worke all things in the sight of God, because God doth bring to passe the things for the which he doth pray and wish, as it is written, *He shall worke the will of them that feare him, and shall heare their petitions, and shall save them.* To this glory surely is no possible accessse by working, but onely by faith and beleefe.

*All things evill
to the unbeliever.*

By the premisses may every man easily perceive, by what meanes a Christian man is free from all, and Lord over all: so that to become just and saved, he shall not need any works at all, but through faith onely obtaineth all those things sufficiently; who if he would be so mad, as to presume to be made a just, a free, and a safe Christian, by force of any good worke, he should surely lose his faith forthwith, together with all his good works, which folly is aptly moralized in that Fable of *Esop*, where the Dogge swimmeth in the water, and carrying flesh in his mouth, deluded with the shadow of the same flesh glittering in

*The liberty of
Christians.*

the water, whiles gaping with open mouth, he snatcheth after the shadow, he both loseth the true flesh, and the shadow withall.

Here you will aske of me, If all be Priests that be in Christs Church: by what title then may they (whom we call commonly Priests now) be discerned from Lay-men? I do answer: There is a great injury committed against these words, to wit, Priest, Clarke, Spirituall, Ecclesiasticall, whiles they be translated from all the rest of the Christians, and be abridged to these few, which through evill custome are tearmed Church men: For holy Scripture doth make no difference betwixt them, saving that it entitleth them by the names of Ministers, Servants, and Stewards, which do now vaunt themselves to be Popes, Bishops, and Lords, which ought to minister to others in preaching the word, to teach the faith of Christ and Christian liberty: For albeit this be true, that we be all Priests indifferently, yet can we not all, nor yet ought we all minister and teach publicly, though we were all able to do so: For so doth *Paul* teach in his first to the Corinthians, the 4. Chap. *Let men so esteeme of us, as ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God.*

To what issue
the ministry Ec-
clesiasticall is
come,

But this Stewardship is now enhaunced unto so mighty a Potentate and pompe of power, and unto a certaine terrible tyranny, that no kingdomes of the Gentiles, ne yet any Empires of the whole world are not able to counter-vaile the same in statelineffe. As though lay-people were a certaine somewhat besides, and no Christians at all. Through which perversenesse it is come to passe, that the true knowledge of Christian grace, Christian faith, and Christian liberty, yea of Christ himselfe, is come wholly to utter ruine, whiles, in the meane space, an importable clogge, and intollerable bondage of mens works, and traditions are crawled up in his place, and we (according to *Jeremies* Lamentations) are become vassals of the most vilest varlets of the world, which do abuse our misery to work all infamous filthinesse, and shamefull reproaches of their beastly licentiousnesse.

But

But to returne to our purpose againe. I suppose that by the foresaid demonstrations it is made manifest, that it sufficeth not to a true Christian man to preach the works, life, and doctrine of Christ, after an historicall manner, and utter the same, as in telling of tales, as though to know them to be patternes of framing our lives, were enough (like as they use to preach which are now accounted the best) much lesse if it be utterly concealed, and instead thereof mens constitutions and traditions be taught to supply the place. There be some now adayes, and they not a few, which to this purpose do preach and teach Christ, that they may move the affections of the people to bewaile the passion and torments which Christ suffered, and to be displeased against the Iews, and such other childish and fond matters of no great importance. But Christ ought to be preached to this end, that faith in him may encrease, that it may appeare, that it is not enough, that there is a Christ, but that he may be Christ (which is a Saviour) unto thee and unto me: And that he doth worke the same in us, which is mentioned of him, and is agreeable to the name whereby he is named: which faith springeth, flourisheth, and is preserved by this, if the preaching do notifie the cause wherefore Christ came, what he brought with him, what he gave, and to what use and purpose he is to be embraced. And this cometh to passe, where Christian libertie (which we do attaine by him) is truly taught: and by what meanes all we Christians are Kings and Priests: wherein also we be Lords over all: and upon what this our affiance (that whatsoever we do is well pleasing and acceptable to God) is grounded, as I have said before.

For whose heart hearing these things will not melt for very joy, and waxe ravished in love of Christ, having received so great a consolation? to the which love he can never possibly attaine by any laws or works at all: what is he that can hurt such a heart, or may apall the same with feare? If conscience of sinne do rush upon him, or horreur of death amaze him, lo, it is ready to trust in the Lord, nor is afraid for any such evill noyse, nor is disquieted, untill

*How Christ
ought to be
preached.*

*The fruit of true
preaching.*

it do despise the enemies, for it beleeveth that Christs righteousness is become his owne righteousness, and that his sinne is now no longer his owne, but Christs sinne. But it behoveth that all sinne be swallowed up at the very sight of Christ, through the faith of Christ, as hath beene declared before, and learne now with the Apostle, to tread upon, and triumph over sinne and death, and to say, *Death, where is thy sting? Death, where is thy victory? the sting of Death is sinne, but the power of sinne is the Law. God be thanked, who hath given us victory through Jesus our Lord,* for death is swallowed up through the conquest, not of Christ onely, but our owne also, because it cometh to passe by our faith, that the conquest is made ours, and that in the same we do overcome.

The demand of
them which do
not conceive
Luther, yea rather
that which do
not conceive
what faith is,

Let this suffice touching the inward man, touching his freedome, and touching the principall righteousness of Faith, which neither need the laws nor works, which will turne to his destruction that dare presume to be justified by them. Now let us returne to the other part; to wit, the outward man: For in this treatie answer shall be made to all them, who being offended with the word of Faith, and with the things that have beene spoken of before, do reply on this wise against us. If faith do accomplish all things, and if Faith be onely and alone sufficient unto righteousness, to what end then are we commanded to do good deeds? we may go play us then, and worke no working at all, being furnished sufficiently with faith? I do answer, *Not so ye ungodly, not so.* Indeed this matter would even so fare, as you say, if we were perfectly and altogether the inward and spirituall men: which we cannot be in any wise, before the last day at the rising againe of the dead. So long as we be clothed with this mortall flesh, we do but begin and proceed outward in our course towards perfection, which will be consummated in the life to come. And for this cause, the Apostle in the eighth to the Romans, doth call this the first-fruits of the Spirit, which we do enjoy in this life, the tenth and fulnesse of which spirit, we shall receive in the life to come. To this belongeth that whereof

we spake before, namely, that a Christian man is servant of all, and subject to all, for in this that he is free, he worketh nothing, but in this, that he is a servant, he worketh all things. Now let us see how these two will stand together. Albeit man be sufficiently justified by faith in the inward man spiritually, as I said before, enjoying all that he ought to have, saving that he must by daily encreasings enlarge this same faith, and riches of grace, untill he be unclothed of his flesh, yet remaineth still in this mortall life, upon the face of the earth, wherein he must of very necessity nourish his owne body, and be conversant among men. And even here now works do begin to take their entrance. Here we may not give our selves to idlenesse. Here now we must apply our selves earnestly to exercise this body with fastings, watchings, labours, and other moderate disciplines, to bring it in subjection to the spirit, that it may become obedient to faith, and conforme it selfe to the inward man, and that it rebell not, nor hinder the spirit, following therein his owne naturall inclination, if it be not otherwise tamed: for the inward man being alike fashioned unto God, and created after the Image of God, through faith, is both joyfull, and comfortable, for the love he hath to Christ, in whom he is endued with so many good things, whereupon in this onely doth it occupie it selfe, namely, to serve the Lord with a free love, with joy, and thanks.

*From whence
works take their
beginning.*

*The onely worke
of the inward
man.*

Now whiles it is exercised in this course, behold in her owne flesh it findeth a contrary will, which travelleth altogether to serve the world, and to seeke the things that are her owne, which the spirit of Faith cannot away withall, nor is able to endure it, and therefore with valiant courage attempteth to subdue and tame this rebellious will, as Paul witnesseth in the seventh to the Romans, *I am delighted with the Law of God in mine inward man, but I see another Law in my members, rebelling against the Law of my minde, and leading me captive into the law of sinne. And in another place, I do chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest whiles I preach to others, I my selfe may be found*

a castaway. And in the fifth to the Galathians: They that are of Christ have crucified the flesh, and the concupiscences thereof.

*Of what minde
we ought to be
in doing good
works.*

But neither we may do these works in any wise, being of the opinion that man may be justified through them in the sight of God. For this false opinion is not tolerable in the eye of Faith, which Faith is the onely righteousness before God. But in these works we must be of the minde, so to bring the flesh into subjection, and to cleane the evil concupiscences thereof, that it may not bend the view of the eye to any thing else, than to the mortifying of evill concupiscence and lust: For when the soule is washed cleane through faith, and made the dearling of Christ, it would also desire that all things else, yea, and her owne body chiefly might be purged together withall, to the end all things in her might love, and glorifie God together, whereby it cometh to passe, that man through an enforcing necessity of the flesh, may not give himselfe to idleness, and for that cause is constrained to do many good things, to the end he may bring his body into subjection. And yet these works are not of such power, as to be able to worke mans justification before God. But man of a very pure love, doth worke the same, to the service and obedience of God, beholding in them nothing else than Gods good will, unto the which he would most willingly and dutifully yeeld all humble obedience in all things.

*How the body
ought to be cha-
stised.
Note.*

By this meanes every man may easily direct himselfe, how he ought most orderly (as the saying is) and most commodiously attemper his owne body, for he shall fast so much, watch and labour so much, as shall seeme most expedient, for the taming of the wantonnesse and licentiousnesse of his body. But those that do vaunt to be justified by works, do regard not the mortification of the flesh, and the lusts thereof, but the works themselves, being of opinion, that if they do very many, and great good deeds, they are thereby in good case, and are become just therewith: sometime hurting the braines, and destroying nature utterly, or at least making it unprofitable. And this

is a wonderfull folly, and grosse ignorance of Christian life, and of Christian faith, to have a will to be justified, and saved by works without faith.

But to the end that which we have said may more easily be conceived, let us make demonstration thereof by similitudes. The works of a Christian man being justified and saved through his owne faith, by the meere and free mercy of God, ought to be of none other value and estimation, than the works of *Adam* and *Eve*, and all their children should have beene in Paradise if they had never sinned, of whom God spake in the second of Genesis on this wise, *God did place man, whom he created, into Paradise, that he might worke and manure the same.* But God created *Adam* just and perfect, and without sinne, so that he should not have need to be justified and made perfect by any his owne worke, endeavour, and safe keeping. But to the end he should not be idle, God enjoyned him this worke, to manure paradise, and to keepe it, which works had beene truly most free, wrought in respect of nothing, but of Gods good pleasure onely, and not to procure righteousness thereby, wherewith he was fully endued already, and which also should have beene joyntly in the creation of us all.

To the same effect be the works of the faithfull beleever, who through his owne faith being restored againe into Paradise, and created againe of new, needeth no works to become, or made just thereby. But because he should not be idle, but manure his owne body, and keepe it, he must do such works of freedome in respect of Gods good will onely, saving that is not yet fully created againe anew with perfect faith and love, which becometh to be increased daily, yet not by force of works, but of their owne strength. Take yet another example. An holy Bishop consecrating a Church, Bishopping children, or executing some other parcell of his function, is not himselfe consecrated a Bishop by force of those exercises, nay rather unlesse he had beene a consecrated Bishop before, none of all these works could have beene to any purpose, but accounted.

A notable similitude.

Faith doth restore into Paradise.

Another example.

ed rather childish, altogether foolish and apish. Even so a Christian man, being first consecrated by his owne faith, doth worke good works indeed, yet is he made thereby never a deale the more holy, or the more a Christian, for this is the worke of faith onely, yea rather, unlesse he did first beleve, and were a Christian before, all his works would not be worth a straw, but rather very wicked, and damnable sinnes.

Two notable
sayings.

And for this cause these two sayings be true, namely, Good works do not make a good man, but a good man doth make the works to be good. And evill works do not make an evill man, but an evill man doth make the works to be evill, so that it behoveth alwayes, that the substance or person be good first, before all good works, and that good works follow then by order, and proceed from a good person, as Christ himselfe witnesseth. *An evill tree doth not bring good fruit, and a good tree doth not bring evill fruit.* For it is evidently knowne by experience, that the fruit doth not beare the tree, and that the tree doth not grow in the fruit: but contrariwise, the trees do beare the fruits, and the fruit doth grow in the trees. Therefore, as it is necessary that the tree be first before the fruit, and that the fruit doth not make the trees good or evill: But contrarily, such as the tree is, such is the fruit: so is it necessary, that the person, or man himselfe, be either good or bad first, before he make a good or bad worke, and that his works make him neither good nor bad, but the man himselfe maketh his owne works good or bad.

Another exam-
ple.

Semblable hereunto may we see in all occupations. An evill house or a good house doth not make an evill or a good Carpenter; but a good or bad Carpenter maketh a good or bad house. And so generally in all kinds of manuell occupations and Sciences, no peece of worke doth make the Artificer good or bad, but such as the Artificer is, such worke maketh he: even so fareth it in the case of mens works. Such as the person is either in faith, or in unbeliefe, such is his worke, if either done in faith, and so good, or done in unbeliefe, and so evill. But contrariwise,
it

it is not so, to wit, such as the worke is, such is the person, made in faith or unbeleefe: for as works do not make a man to be a beleever, so neither do they make a man righteous. But faith, as it maketh man beleeving and righteous, so doth it make his works to be good. For as much *Onely faith ju-* therefore as works do not justifie any man, and that it be- *stifieth.* hoveth man to be righteous before he worke any good worke: it appeareth most manifestly, that faith onely by the meere mercy of God through Christ Iesu in his word, doth make worthy, and sufficiently justifie, and save the person: and that a Christian man needeth no worke nor law at all, thereby to attaine salvation, for that through faith he is free from all law, and doth freely worke all things that he worketh of his owne meere good will, respecting therein neither profit, nor salvation, but onely the good will of God, for as much as he is now already fully replenished, and made safe by the grace of God through his owne faith.

Even so no good worke availeth to righteousness and salvation to the unbeleeving person. On the other side, no evill worke maketh him evill or damnable, but his owne unbeleefe, which both maketh the tree evill, and withall, maketh the works evill and damnable; whereupon in this, that any person is made good or bad, he doth not receive this being good or bad by works, but this his good or evill taketh beginning from the root of faith or unbeleefe, as the wise man recordeth, *The beginning of sinne is to fall from God:* which is in effect, to be unbeleeving. And Paul in the 11. to the Hebrews, *It behooveth him that cometh to God, to beleeve.* The same also speaketh Christ, *Either make the tree good, and the fruit thereof good, or make the tree evill, and the fruit thereof evill.* As if he might say, Who so will make good fruits, must begin at the tree first, and plant upon a good stock, so who so will make good works, must begin, not at the working, but at the beleeving, which beleefe doth make the person good, for nothing maketh the person good, but faith; nor any thing maketh him evill, but unbeleefe. Indeed this is true, that

*The unbelee-
ving person is
not made evill
by works.*

works do make
a man good, but
that is in the
sight of men.

[The originall of
ome mens er-
rour.

by works man is made good or evil in the judgement of men, but this is as much in effect, as to do it to understand, and let it be knowne who be good, or who be evil, whereof Christ speaketh in the seventh of *Matthew*: *You shall know them by their fruits.* But this knowledge consisteth onely in shew, and outward appearance, and semblance, wherein many are deceived that presume to teach and prescribe, whereby men may be justified in the meane time, making not once so much mention of Faith at all, masking still in their owne misthaze, alwayes deceived, and deceiving others, going forward from worse unto worse, blinde guides of the blinde, wearying themselves with a multitude of works, and yet never attaining to true righteousness, of whom *Paul* writeth in the first to *Timothy*, the third Chapter: *Having indeed an utter shew of holinesse, but denying the power thereof, alwayes learning, but never attaining to the knowledge of the truth.* Therefore behooveth him that will not wander out of the way, with these blinde guides, to enter into a deeper consideration, than the utter shew of works, of laws, and doctrines of works, but must rather with a quite contrary aspect pry into the person, and note diligently the reason, whereby man is justified: and here shall he finde, that man is justified and saved, not by works, nor by the Law, but by the Word of God, that is to say, by the promise of his grace, and by faith, that to the glory thereof may redound to the majesty of God, *Who hath saved us that beleeve, not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his owne mercy, through the word of his owne grace.*

Rules to under-
stand the do-
ctrines of many.

Whereby it remaineth easie to be knowne in what respect good works are to be rejected or embraced, and in what sence all the doctrines of men touching works ought to be understood: for if works be compared to righteousness, and be practised by a perverse Leviathan, and of that false perswasion, to presume upon the obtaining true justification thereby, they do now enforce a necessity unavoidable, and do utterly extinguish liberty and faith withall: and so even by this meanes are now no more good, but meerly.

meerely damnable, for they be not now free, but blasphemous to the grace of God, whose onely property is through faith to justifie and save, which things works do affect to bring to passe, not of any their ability, but by a wicked foole-hardinesse onely, issuing from our own grosse ignorance: by reason whereof they do violently rush, and intrude into the office of grace, and the glory thereof. For this cause therefore we do not reject good works, but rather do most heartily embrace and teach them: Neither do we condemne them in respect of themselves, but in respect of the wicked addition given unto them, and perverse opinion conceived of them, in the attaining of righteousness whereby it cometh to passe, that they appeare good onely in shew, being not good in deed, and in truth, thereby being themselves deceived, and deceiving others also, as ravening wolves clothed in sheeps skinnes.

*The reason of
Luthers do-
ctrine.*

And this Leviathan and perverse opinion in works cannot possibly be reclaimed, where pure faith wanteth, nor is removeable from these holy work-men before that Faith the vanquisher thereof come in place and beare dominion in the heart. Nature is not of it selfe forcible enough to expell it, no not so much as to take notice thereof, but esteemeth it in place of a most holy will: whereas if custome prevaile, and take deep rooting in this perversenesse of nature (as is already brought to passe through wicked teachers) it is an incurable disease, and leadeth astray innumerable people into destruction unrecoverable. And therefore albeit it be a commendable thing to preach and write gloriously of repentance, confession, and satisfaction, yet if they surcease here, and proceed no further, even to the instructing of faith: such doctrine doubtlesse is deceiveable and dwellish: For even so Christ with his beloved *John* did not onely say, *Repent ye of your sinnes*: But added also the word of faith, *For, the kingdome of heaven is at hand.*

*The wake of
Leviathan.*

For the one part of Gods word ought not to be preached alone, but both together must be taught: both new and old must be delivered out of this treasury, as well the voice

*Preachers must
exhort to faith.*

of the Law, as the word of Grace. The voyce of the Law must be uttered, that the people may be terrified, and framed to know their sinnes, and thereby be turned to repentance, and amendment of their former life. But here forthwith must not stay be made: for this were onely to wound, and not minister playster: to lance, and not to heale: to kill, and not to quicken: to leade unto hell gates, and not to deliver from thence: to throw downe altogether, and not raise up. Wherefore the word of grace also, and the word of promised forgivenesse, ought likewise to be preached, to instruct and raise up the faith, without the which in vaine is the doctrine of the Law, of contrition, of repentance, and of all other things also practised and preached.

From whence repentance or faith do proceed.

Indeed there remaine as yet certaine preachers of Repentance and Grace, but they do not disclose the Law, and the promises of God, in that lively spirit and force as others capacities may attaine to the true fountaines and spring-head of Repentance and Grace. For Repentance proceedeth from out the Law of God, but Faith or Grace doth issue from Gods promise. As the Apostle witnesseth in the tenth to the Romans. *Faith cometh by hearing, but hearing cometh of the word of Christ*: Wherefore it cometh to passe, that man receiveth consolation, and is raised up through Faith of Gods promises, who otherwise through the threatnings and terrours of Gods Law, is brought low, and throwne downe into the knowledge of himselfe. Whereof the Psalmist in the 29. Psalme: *Mourning shall dwell untill the evening, and joyfulness untill the morning.*

Of works towards our neighbours.

Let this suffice to have beene spoken of works in generall, and of those works also which a Christian man doth exercise towards his owne body. Lastly, we will speake of those works which the Christian doth employ to the use of his neighbour. For man doth not live unto himselfe onely in this mortall body, to worke in the same, but to all men generally upon the earth. Nay rather man liveth onely to other men, and not to himselfe: For to this end doth he

he keepe his body in subjection, that he may thereby more sincerely and freely serve to the necessities of others. As witnesseth *Paul* in the 14. to the Romans. *No man liveth to himselfe, and no man dyeth to himselfe. For he that liveth, liveth unto God: and he that dyeth, dyeth unto God.* It is not possible therefore, that in this life man should be idle and unfruitfull towards his neighbours. For of very necessity he must talke, worke, and be conversant amongst men. *Even as Christ made to our likenesse in properties, was found to be as man, and conversant amongst men: as Baruch* testifieth in his 3. Chapter.

And yet he needeth none of all these to procure righteousness and salvation. And therefore in all his works be-
 hoveth him to be so framed in minde, and to direct his whole affection onely to minister to the necessities of others, to seeke the commodity of others, in all his deeds, having regard to nothing else, than to the behoofe and profit of his neighbour. For even so the Apostle commandeth us to worke with our hands, that we may have wherewith to releev the necessity of our brethren: whereas otherwise he might have said, to have wherewith to cherish our owne bodies: but let him give (saith he) to him that is in need: For the property of true Christianity is, to regard the state of his owne body, to this end, that through health and well preserving the same, he may be able to labour to gaine riches, and to employ them to the releefe of the needy. That so the strong member may help the weake member, and that we may be the sonnes of God, carefull, and travelling each for other, bearing one anothers burthen, and by this meanes fulfilling the law of Christ. Behold here the true Christian life, this is the naturall lively faith, effectually through love: that is to say, when it breaketh forth into the worke of most free service, with joy and love, wherein he doth freely and of his owne accord, minister to others, reknowledging it selfe fully satisfied with the abundance and riches of his owne faith.

A Christian must apply himself to all men.

To what end the body must be cherish'd.

The true Christian faith.

After the same manner when *Paul* had made evident

to the Philippians, how rich they were made through the faith of Christ, in the which they had received plenteousnesse of all things, he giveth unto them another lesson, and saith, *If you have received any consolation of Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the holy Ghost, fulfill then my joy, that ye may be all of one minde, and be endued all with the like love, being alike minded, and thinking all one thing, esteeming nothing of your selves through contention or vaine glory, but striving to excell each other in humility, every one regarding not the things of his owne, but the necessities of others.* Lo here by this rule of the Apostle, we see plainly the life of true Christians to consist in this, that all their works be directed to the commodity of others, for as much as every person doth so much abound through his owne faith, that all other works, and all his whole life, doth overflow unto him, wherewith he may be able to minister unto, and profit our neighbour, of a free, and voluntary good will, and benevolence.

*The depravers
of the Apostles
doctrine.*

And to this effect he exciteth unto them Christ for an example, saying, *Let the same minde be in you, which was in Christ Jesu,* who when he was in the shape of God, thought it no robbery to be equall with God. *Neverthelesse he made himselfe of no reputation, taking upon him the shape of a servant, and became like unto men, and was found in apparrell as a man, he humbled himselfe, and was made obedient even unto the death.* For this most whollome word of the Apostle have they hidden in darknesse from us, which were altogether ignorant in the speeches of the Apostle, namely, *The shape of God, the shape of servant, apparrell, and the likenesse of men,* and did apply the same preposterously, to the natures of divinity, and humanity: whereas *Pauls* meaning was, that whereas Christ was fully beautified with the shape of God, and abundantly flowing with the store of all good things, so that he needed not any worke, nor any passion to make him righteous and saved (for he did absolutely possesse all those things, even from the first beginning of himselfe) yet was he not puffed up in pride with these, nor was lift up above us, nor did challenge

to himselfe a certaine power over us, albeit he might in his owne right have claimed the same : But contrariwise, did so behave himselfe in labour, in works, in suffering, and in doing, that he might be like unto other men, both in apparrell and countenance, none otherwise, than as man, even as if he had needed all these, and had possessed no parcell of the shape of God : all which nevertheless he undertooke for our sakes, to the end he might minister unto our necessities, and that all things might be made ours, which he should bring to passe in this shape of a servant.

Even so a Christian man being full and abounding through his faith like unto Christ his head, ought to be contented with this shape of God obtained through faith (saying that he ought to encrease the same Faith, as I said before, untill it be made perfect) for this is the life of man, his righteousness, and salvation, both saving the person, making him acceptable, and furnishing him with all things whatsoever Christ doth possesse, as is before mentioned, which also *Paul* in the 1. to the Galath. doth confirme, saying : *But in this that I live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the sonne of God.*

A Christian ought to conforme himselfe to Christ.

And although he be on this wise free from all works, yet in this freedome ought he nevertheless to make himselfe of no reputation, and put on the shape of a servant, and to become like unto men, to be found in apparrell as a man, and to minister, and to helpe, and by all meanes possible to worke his neighbours commodity, even after the selfe same manner as he feeleth, that God hath done, and daily doth for him through Christ, and this also he must do gratis without all respect, saving in respect of Gods good pleasure, and even after this manner must he thinke unfainedly.

Behold my good God hath given unto me most unworthy and damned creature, beyond all desert, of his meere and free mercy, in Christ Iesu, all the treasures of righteousness and salvation, so that henceforth I shall not stand in want of any thing at all, but of Faith, which may firmly beleve in Christ : Wherefore to this so loving a father, who

The confidence of a Christian man.

who hath overwhelmed me with these his inestimable riches, why should not I frankly, joyfully, with all my heart, and with all my most loving and willing soule, yeeld all service whatsoever I do know to be well pleasing, and is acceptable in his eyes.

Wherefore I will give my selfe wholly a certain Christ unto my neighbour, even as Christ gave himselfe unto me, and will do nothing in this transitory life, but that which I shall perceive to be necessary, commodious, and profitable for my neighbour, in as much, as I am sufficiently enough enriched with all good things in Christ through Faith.

*The fruit of
Faith.
Behold gentle
Reader how
worthily is Lu-
ther reproached.*

Lo here out of Faith floweth Love, and rejoycing in the Lord, and out of Love floweth likewise a cheerfull, liberall, and free heart to minister to the necessity of thy neighbour, frankly of thy owne accord, so that here now is no consideration had of gratitude, or ingratitude, of praise or dispraise, of vantage or of losse: For neither doth he apply hereunto to winne the favour of men, nor maketh any difference betwixt friends or foes, nor respecteth the thankfull or unthankfull, but most frankly and with most glad some cheare doth yeeld himselfe wholly, and all that he possesseth without regard whether he lose the same in the unthankfull, or employ it on the deserving: For even so his father doth, disposing all things to all abundantly, and most freely, making his Sunne to shine upon the good, and the wicked. In like manner, the sonne doth worke, and suffer nothing but of a free and chearfull joy, wherewith through Christ he is delighted in God the giver of so great and inestimable treasures.

*We ought to
know how great
things are given
us.*

You see therefore, if we acknowledge all those things which are given unto us, of greatest and highest price (as *Peter* saith) that forthwith love is powred abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost, whereby we are free, chearfull, omnipotent, doers, workers, and conquerours of all tribulation, servants of our neighbours, yet Lords of all things notwithstanding. But such as do not know the gifts given unto them through Christ, to them Christ is borne in vaine: such

such wander in the way of works, and shall never attaine to the taste and feeling of those things. Therefore as our neighbour is pressed downe with necessitie, and wanteth of our store and abundance, even so were we overwhelmed with necessity in the sight of God, and needed altogether his mercy. Wherefore as our heavenly Father did succour us in Christ Iesu freely, even so ought we helpe our neighbour freely by our body, and by our works, and every one of us must be made a certaine Christ each to other, that we may be made debtors of Christ, and that Christ may be one and the same in all, that is to say, that we may be true Christians.

Who is able therefore to comprehend the riches and glory of a Christian life, which is able to do all things, possesseth all things, and needeth nothing, an Emperesse and Conqueresse of sinne, death, and hell, and withall an hand-maid neverthelesse, serviceable and profitable to all? but the more is the pity. This Christian justification is, at this day, altogether unknowne in the whole world, neither is it preached, nor procured, in so much, that we are our selves ignorant of our name, and for what cause we be deemed and called Christians. True it is, we have received our denomination of Christ, not being absent from us, but dwelling within us. That is to say, whiles we beleve in him, and be joyntly and mutually a certaine Christ each to other, applying our selves to our neighbours, even as Christ hath given himselfe to us.

The glory of a Christian life.

In what respect we be named Christians

But in these our dayes we are taught by mens doctrines to seeke after nought else but deservings, and merits, and the things which are our owne, and have made of Christ nought else, but a sharpe Law-maker, much more austere than *Moses* was.

Semblably, the blessed Virgin *Mary* did exhibite her selfe a singular president of the Faith above all others, whiles after the manner of all other women she was purified according to *Moses* Law (as it is let downe in the 2. of *Luke*) whereas being notwithstanding not bound to any such Law, nor needed to be purified in any such

The holy Mother of Christ: an example of faith.

wife, yet she yielded her selfe to the Law of her owne accord, and of a free love unto the Law, being made like unto other women, lest she might seeme to offend or despise them. She was not therefore made righteous for that worke, but being righteous before, she did this deed freely, and without coaction. In like manner ought our works to be put in ure, not to the end to be justified by them, for as much as being justified first by Faith, it behoveth us to worke all things freely, and cheerfully for our neighbours sake.

Paul doth teach
works.

So also *Paul* did circumcise his scholar *Timothy*, not because *Timothy* needed to be circumcised unto righteousness: but lest he might offend or despise the Jews that were weake in Faith, and which as yet were not capable of the freedome of Faith. But contrariwise, when as the Jews did urge a necessitie to be circumcised to righteousness, letting at naught the freedome of Faith, he did withstand them, and would not permit *Titus* to be circumcised, Galath. 3. for as he would not willingly offend or contemne the imbecillitie or weaknesse of others in the Faith, applying himselfe to their capacity for a time: so likewise, would he not give place to the will of stiffe-necked Iusticiaries, when the liberty of Faith was like to suffer reproach, or be despised, keeping the midway, bearing with the weake for a season, and alwayes setting himselfe against the indurate, to the end he might convert all in generalitie to embrace the liberty of Faith. With like affection must our works be employed, that we tolerate the weaklings in faith, as the Apostle teacheth in the 14. to the *Rom.* but that with courage we resist the inflexible urgers of works, of the which we will treat more at large hereafter.

An example of
our Lord Christ.

Likewile Christ in the 17. of *Matthew*, when tribute was demanded of his Disciples, asked the question of Saint *Peter*, whether the children of the kingdome were exempt from paying Tribute, and *Peter* affirming that they were, did command him notwithstanding to go to the Sea, speaking these words, *Lest we give them cause of offence, go,*
and

and the Fish that first cometh to thy hands take, and opening his mouth, thou shalt finde a great, take the same, and give it for thee and me.

This example is very much available for our purpose. In the which, Christ doth call himselfe and his disciples free, and Kings sonnes, which stand in need of nothing, and yet of his owne accord submitteth himselfe, and payeth tribute.

Therefore, by how much this worke of Christ was necessary to Christ, and profitable unto righteousness and salvation, even so much are all the works of his elect and faithfull available to righteousness, whereas they be all following after righteousness, and freely performed onely to the necessity and example of others.

Of the same condition are the works prescribed by *Paul* in the 13. Chap. to the Romans, and in the 3. to Timoth. *That men should be subject to the higher powers, and prepared to all good works:* not because they should be justified thereby, whereas they be righteous already through faith, but that by these they might both be subject to others, and to the higher powers, and of a free love yeeld humbly obedience to their will in the freedome of the spirit.

Take bold of Luther all yee Religious, and admit him to be your teacher.

Of this same sort ought the works of all Colledges, Monasteries, and Priests have beene employed, that every of them might have performed the works of their profession and estate to this end, that by these, every of them might exercise not righteousness, but the taming of his owne body, yeelding thereby example to others, who have themselves also need to chastise their owne bodies. Then also, that they might expresse humble obedience to others, applying themselves to their commandment, of a free love, having neverthelesse a speciall regard alwayes to this onely, to wit, that through vaine confidence, none of them presume to be justified, to merit, or to be saved by them, which thing is the proper and peculiar office of faith onely, as I have often said before.

Therefore, who so were furnished with this doctrine, might easily without danger wade in these infinite impos-

The knowledge of a true Christian.

fitions and traditions of the Pope, of Bishops, of Monkeries, of Churches, of Princes, and Magistrates, the which some foolish Pastors do so obtrude upon us, as though they were of an unavoidable necessitie to be performed, for the obtaining of righteousness and salvation, calling them commonly the injunctions of the Church, being indeed nothing lesse. For a Christian man may debate with himselfe on this wise, I will fast, I will pray, I will apply my selfe to all whatsoever is commanded by men, not because I need to do any of these, to procure righteousness or salvation by them: but because I will expresse mine obedience herein to the Pope, to the Bishops, to the Potentate, and to the Magistrate, or to my neighbour for example sake, for this cause I will do and suffer all things, even as Christ did worke and suffer many great things for my sake, whereof he needed not to do any one, being made for my sake subject unto the Law, when as indeed he was not under the Law. And although these things be exacted of me through the tyrannous force, and injurious tyranny of the Magistrates, yet shall they be no prejudice to me, so long as they be not against the glory of God.

*The difference
betwixt the
good and the
evill Pastors.*

The premisses considered, it is an easie matter for any man to judge certainly: betwixt the difference of all works, and all Laws, and know skillfully who be blinde, and witlesse Preachers, and who be true and faithfull Pastors. For whatsoever worke be not directed to this onely marke, namely, to be employed to the chastisement of the body, or to the dutifull consideration of the neighbour (so that it enforce not any thing directly against Gods glory) surely that worke is neither good nor Christianlike. And this is the cause, that I feare me much, very few Colledges at all, any Monasteries, Altars, or any Ecclesiasticall exercises at this day, be not truly Christian, and that also as well those proper and peculiar fastings, as the perty prayers to certaine Saints be not Christian, I feare me much (I say) that in all these things regard is had of nought else, but that which appertaineth to our selves, whiles we be thus minded, that by meanes of these exercises, our finnes are

are cleansed, and salvation obtained thereby, and so Christian liberty is overthrowne, the cause whereof proceedeth from blinde ignorance of the true Christian Faith, full of all freedome. Which grosse ignorance and suppression of liberty, very many blinde and buffardly Pastors do earnestly maintaine, whilest they do greedily perswade, and urge the people to such exercises, advancing them above Moone and starres, and glorifying them with their pardons, but of faith never uttering so much as one word. But I would with thee to be well advised, that if thou have will at any time to pray, to fast, or to found Churches (as they tearme it) to beware thou do not this to the end to procure to thy selfe any temporall or everlasting commodity therewith: for in so doing, thou shalt be prejudiciall to thy faith, which onely doth minister all things unto thee, and therefore ought onely be attended unto, that it may be encreased, whether it be occupied in works, or exercised with afflictions: but give freely without hope of requitall, whatsoever thou givest, that others may be relieved, and grow in well doing through thee, and thy liberality, for this is the way to make thee a good and a true Christian man. For what shall availe thee, thy goods, and thy works, whereof thou art endued with a surplus, over and besides those which do serve to the necessary chastisement of the body? when as thou art sufficiently enriched for thy necessities, through thy faith, in the which God hath endued thee with all plentiful store.

Good advice.

Onely faith must be attended unto.

10.

Behold, by this rule it behoveth us to powre out each upon other, and to make common each unto other the goods which we have received of God, and that every man cloath himselfe with his neighbours estate, and so apply himselfe to his neighbours necessities, even as if we were in the like necessity our selves: out of Christs storehouse they overflowed, and from him flow daily unto us, who hath so taken our necessities upon himselfe, and so performed all things for our sakes, as if himselfe had beene the same that we be. They flow likewise from us, unto

A rule touching brotherly love.

them who stand in need of them, in so much, that I am bound to powre out before God my faith, and my righteousness, to cover and entreat for the sinnes of my neighbour, the burthen of whose sinnes I must in mine owne person sustaine, and so travell and be afflicted in them, as if they were mine owne sinnes; for on this wise was Christ afflicted for our sakes, for this is the very true love, this is the rule of a pure Christian love, which is in them very naturall and pure indeed, in whom dwelleth a pure and sincere Faith indeed, whereupon, the Apostle in the 1. to the Corinthians, the thirteenth Chapter, doth give this singular prerogative to love, *That it seeketh not the things that are her owne.*

A Christian man doth live in himselfe, and in his neighbor.

And therefore we do conclude, that a Christian man doth not live in himself, but in Christ, and in his neighbour, or that to be a Christian man, is to dwell in Christ by faith, and in his neighbour by love.

Againe, a Christian man is raised up above himselfe to Godward by Faith, and is throwne downe beneath himselfe, toward his neighbour by love, dwelling alwayes nevertheless in God, and in the love of God, according to the saying of Christ in the first of Iohn, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, from henceforth you shall see the heavens opened, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Sonne of man.* And thus farre sufficiently concerning Christian liberty, which is (as you see) spirituall, and true, making our hearts free from all sinnes, from all laws, and commandments (as *Paul* witnesseth in his first Epistle to *Timothy*, the first Chapter, *The Law was not made for the just man*) which liberty doth as farre surmount all other outward and externall liberties in excellency, as the Heavens doe surpasse the Earth, which Christ grant us to understand, and enjoy to our comfort, Amen.

In fine, to satisfie those persons, who can never heare any thing be it never so well spoken, but that they will deprave it by evill conceiving, somewhat must be annexed, if that at the least they bee able to conceive the same. There be

be very many, who hearing the doctrine of this Christian liberty of Fayth, will by and by take occasion thereof, to maintayne the liberty of the flesh, supposing forthwith that they may lawfully attempt all things, nor will expresse their liberty and Christianity in any one thing else, than in despising, and reproving of Ceremonies, of mens traditions and constitutions, as though they ought for this cause to be deemed Christians, because they do not fast in the dayes appointed for fasting, or because they eat flesh, whilest others do abstaine from flesh, or because they do not frequent Masses, and Mattens, or other usuall Service in the Church, disdainefully scorning and scoffing at the ordinances of men, utterly setting at naught all other things appertaining to Christian Religion. Against whom, there is another sort that do with tooth and nayle bend their force, which contrariwise, doe endeavour to attaine salvation, by the only observation and reverence of Ceremonies, as though they should for this cause bee saved, because they fast on the fasting dayes or abstaine from flesh, or inure themselves to certaine prayers, excessively vaunting the traditions of the Church, and of the Fathers, yet otherwise not esteeming the things that are proper and peculiar to our Christian Faith, worth a rush, both which sorts of people are surely altogether much blameworthy, for as much, as passing over matters of great importance, and carelessly neglecting the things necessarily belonging to salvation, they turmoyle themselves in so great outrage about those trifling toyes, being altogether unnecessary and unprofitable.

*against pharisee
liberty of the
flesh.*

*Against the con-
fidence in
works.*

How much more soundly doth *Paul* teach to keepe the midde way, condemning both those by-paths, saying, *He that eateth, let him not despise him that eateth not: and he that eateth not, let him not judge him that eateth.* Here you see, that such as do neglect, and condemne the ceremonies, not of devotion, but of meere contempt, be accounted blame-worthy, whereas the Apostle teacheth them not to despise, for knowledge doth cause to swell, and

and to be puffed up. Again, he exhorteth the obstinate, that they judge not others, for neither of them doth observe charity, edifying one another, wherefore in this perplexity, counsell must be sought out of Scripture, which doth teach us, not to decline on the right, nor on the left hand, but to ensue the right judgements of the Lord, quickning the hearts: for as no man is righteous, because he humbleth himselfe, and is addicted to works, and rites of ceremonies, so neither shall any man be accounted for this only cause righteous, because he doth omit and contemne them.

For we be not freed through our faith in Christ from works, but from the opinions of works, that is to say, from the foolish presumption conceived of justification, purchased by meanes of works: for Faith doth redeeme our consciences, doth orderly keepe and preserve the same, whereby we attaine this knowledge, that righteousness consisteth not in works, albeit works neither can, nor ought to be neglected. As we cannot live in this world without food and sustenance, nor without the generall preservation of this mortall body, yet is not our righteousness settled in these, but in Faith, for the which, the other things notwithstanding may not be despised, and utterly shaken off. So in this world, we be fast chained to the necessary preservation of the life of this body, yet are we not thereby made righteous, *My kingdome* (saith Christ) *is not from hence, nor of this world*: but he said not, my kingdome is not here, nor in this world. Likewise *Paul*, *Albeit we walke in the flesh, yet our warfare is not according to the flesh*. And in the first to the Galathians, *Whereas I do live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Sonne of God*. Even so in this that we worke, that we live, and that we are exercised in works and ceremonies, the necessity of this present life, and the carefull regard of governing our bodies, doth exact it of us, yet are we never a deale righteous by them, but in the Faith of the Sonne of God. Therefore, a Christian man must keepe his course in the
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On the other side, we shall meet with the simple, unlearned, ignorant, and weake in Faith (as *Paul* calleth them) whose capacities are not yet able to comprehend this libertie of Faith, though they have a will thereunto. Such must be borne withall, lest they be offended: and their weaknesse must be favoured, untill they may be more fully instructed. For whereas those persons do not observe such ceremonies of any grounded malice, nor are wilfully obstinate in judgement, but conceive of them according to the imbecillity of their Faith onely, fastings, abstinence from choice meats, and such other ceremonies, which they do suppose to be necessarie, must be observed for avoyding offence in them. For this doth Charitie exact of us, which hurteth no man, but helps us. For such continue not weaklings through their owne default, but through the negligence of their Pastors, which with their

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their cramps and grappling irons of traditions, have intangled, evill handled, and deadly wounded them, who otherwise ought to have beene delivered, made whole, and revived with the doctrine of Faith and Christian Liberty. The same doth the Apostle teach in the fourteenth Chap. to the Rom. *If my meat do offend my brother, I will not eat flesh for ever.* And againe, *I know that in Christ there is nothing defiled, but unto him that thinketh it to be defiled, but it is evill to the man that eateth to the offence of his brother.*

*Against the
laws and law-
makers,*

Therefore, although we must stoutly withstand those teachers of Traditions, and sharply inveigh against the constitutions of Bishops, wherewith they over-runne the people of God, yet regard must be had of the timorous weaklings, whom those cruell bloud-suckers, do cruelly detaine captive with those traditions, untill they be set at liberty. On this wise encounter manfully against the Wolves, but for the Sheepe, and not against the Sheepe also, which thou shalt the better do, if thou bend thy force earnestly against those Laws, and Law-makers, and yet withall thy selfe observe them in the sight of the weak, lest they become offended through thee, untill themselves may know their Tyranny, and understand their owne Liberties. And if thou wilt enjoy thine owne liberty, use it to thy selfe in secret (*as Paul teacheth thee in the fourteenth to the Romans*) *Keep thou the Faith which thou hast unto thy selfe before God, but beware that thou use it not before the weak.* Again, *Before Tyrants and obstinate frowards, use the same in despite of them, yea, and that most manfully and constantly: That they also may understand their own wickednesse.* And their Laws to be nothing available to righteousnesse, as also that they had no authority to make such laws.

*To the yong in
yeares,*

For as much therefore, as the society of this present life cannot be maintained in due order without ceremonies and works: Yea rather, forasmuch as the raging and rude age of yong persons hath need to be restrained with such reins

reins as with a Snaffle, and that every man ought to chastise his own body: with the same exercises, it becometh therefore the Minister of Christ to be prudent and faithfull, that he may so instruct and guide Christs flocke in all these things, that their Conscience and Faith may not be offended, and to be circumspect, that no unsavourie opinion, nor bitter smatch of loathsomnesse may take root in them, by meanes whereof, many may be infected (whereof *Paul* did forewarne the Hebrews) that is to say, lest loosing their faith utterly, they begin to be defiled with vaine presumption of works, as though they were to be saved by works, which is a speedy contagion, and doth pierce deeply into many, unlesse faith be busily and seriously enforced withall, but the disease is unavoydable, where faith being put up to silence, onely Traditions of men taught to be retained, as hath beene hitherto through the pestiferous, detestable, and soule-slaying Traditions of our Prelates, and vagrant opinions of our Divines, haling infinite soules to the Devill, with these intricate fetters, which by plaine demonstration doth denounce very Antichrist himselfe.

To conclude, such as is poverty in abundance, painfulnesse in authority, humblenesse in honour, abstinence in feasting, chastity in dalliance: even so righteousness of faith is dangerously beset being joyned with ceremonies. *Danger in the ceremonies.*
May a man carry fire in his bosome (saith Solomon) and not burne his garments? And yet as in riches, in authority, in honours, in dalliance, in banquettings, so must we be conversant in ceremonies, that is to say, in dangers: yea rather as it is needfull for yong boyes to be nursed, and cherished in the laps and armes of Maydens, lest they perish, in whom being growne to riper yeares, were no small perill of safety to frequent the company of Maydens: Even so is it requisite to locke up the ranging yeares of licentious youth in the Cloysters, yea, in iron cloffets of such ceremonies and exercises, whereas they may be restrained, and abide correction, lest their insolent courage draw them headlong into sin. Which ceremonies neverthelesse procure

death unto them, if they persevere in opinion to be justifiable by them, whereas they ought rather to be instructed, that they were clogged with such restraint, not for any such cause as to be made righteous, or to merit much thereby, but to the end, they should not rush wilfully into vices, and so be the more tractable trained to the righteousness of Faith: which they would in no wise endure through the outrage of their youth, unless the same had been tamed and brought low.

Of what estimation ceremonies be.

Which doth argue, that ceremonies ought not to be of any other price and estimation in the life of a true Christian man, than as amongst Carpenters and Artificers, certaine, old posts, logges, or platformes, are framed to direct and raise up buildings by: which be not made to the end they should serve and remaine to any speciall use, but because without such by-helps, buildings and works cannot easily be raised, for when the work or building is finished, those devices are laid aside.

So that here you see, that ceremonies are not utterly abrogated, but rather earnestly required; but the vaine perswasion and presumption of them is contemned, because no man accounteth them to be a true and permanent building. If any man would be so notably senselesse, as to regard nothing else in his whole life, but to direct those preparatives, with all honour, with all diligence, with all continuance, and would never bende his cogitations to the very building it selfe, stroking, smoothing, and vaunting himselfe in these preparatives, and vaine rotten proppes, would not all men lament his madnesse, and thinke within themselves, that whiles he employed this cost to no purpose, he might have builded some matter of better substance? So now we do neither abandon ceremonies, nor works, but rather do allow them: nevertheless we do utterly abhorre the vaine opinion conceived of them, lest that any man perswade himselfe, that to observe them is the true righteousness, as Hypocrites do, which do abuse and mispend their whole life in these exercises,

exerciles, and never reach unto the substance, in respect whereof they are practised, or as the Apostle speaketh: *Alwayes learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the Truth:* For they seeme as though they had a will to build, and alwayes prepare themselves thereunto, and yet they never build, persisting alwayes in the glittering shadow of godlinesse, but never attaine to the power and substance thereof.

Yet do they wonderfully flatter themselves in these exerciles, presuming also arrogantly to judge all others, whom they see not glittering in the like bravery of works, whereas they might otherwise be able to atchieve matters of greater importance, to the singular comfort of themselves and others, with this vainely imployed ostentation, and abuse of Gods gifts, if they were indued with a right and true faith. But whereas the nature of man and reason (as they tearme it) naturall, is naturally inclined to superstition, and pursuing all Laws and works, is prone of her selfe to fall into vaine presumption of obtaining justification through them: adde moreover hereunto, because it is accustomed and inured to conceive so highly of the same works, through the usuall admiration of all earthly law-makers, it is not possible surely of her owne strength, to cleare it selfe from this servile bondage of works, and to bend her force to know the liberty of faith.

*Against them
that bee notably
superstitious*

Therefore it is requisite, that we flee to prayer, that the Lord would vouchsafe to draw us, and make us instructed unto GOD, that is to say, apt Scholars for GOD, and that himselfe will vouchsafe to write his Law in our hearts (as he hath promised) otherwise we do all come to confusion. For except he do engraffe in our soules this marvellous Wisedome hidden in a mystery, Nature cannot chuse but condemne it, and adjudge it for an Heretick, because she is offended in it, and appeareth foolish in her eyes. Even as we saw to have happened in times past to

*From whence
the law of wise-
dome doth pro-
ceed.*

the Prophets of God, and the Apostles, and even as the wicked blinde Prelates, and their false flatterers do now unto me, and others like unto me. Vnto whom, and to us also, **G O D** be mercifull, and shew the light of his countenance upon us, that we may know his way upon the earth, and his saving health amongst all Generations : who be blessed for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.



